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PATENT APPLICATION

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of: )  
HIDEAKI OHSHIMA et al. )  
Application No.: 09/176,274 )  
Filed: October 21, 1998 )  
For: IMAGE PROCESSING )  
APPARATUS AND METHOD, )  
AND COMPUTER-READABLE )  
MEMORY :

Examiner: T. Huynh

Group Art Unit: 2176

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231 on

October 11, 2001

(Date of Deposit)

Dennis A. Duchene, Reg. No. 40,595

Name of Attorney for Applicant

Signature

10/11/01  
Date of Signature

October 11, 2001

Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231

RESPONSE TO RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

RECEIVED  
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Group 2100

Sir:

In response to the restriction requirement set forth in the Office Action dated September 11, 2001, Applicants provisionally elect Group II, namely, Claims 1 to 11, 15 to 25 and 29. The election is made with traverse.

An application may be properly required to be restricted to one of two or more claimed inventions only if the inventions are able to support separate patents and they are either independent or distinct. MPEP § 803. If the search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the Examiner must examine it on the merits, even though it includes claims to independent or distinct inventions. MPEP § 803.

"The term 'distinct' means that two or more subjects as disclosed are related, for example, as combination and part (sub-combination) thereof, process and apparatus for its practice, process and product made, etc., but are capable of separate manufacture, use, or sale as claimed and are patentable (novel and unobvious) over each other (though they may each be unpatentable because of the prior art)." MPEP § 802.01. In this regard, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims of Groups I, II and III are all directed to document graphic editing and graphic formatting. Accordingly, two-way distinctness is not seen to be present among the claims of Groups I, II and III. MPEP § 806.05(c).

Even if Groups I, II and III are considered to be independent or distinct inventions, which Applicants do not admit to be the case, the search and examination of all pending claims of Groups I, II and III can be made without serious burden, and therefore restriction is improper. MPEP § 803. Specifically, the claims of Groups I, II and III are all directed to document graphic editing and graphic formatting. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that concurrent search and examination of all claims of Groups I, II and III can be made without serious burden.

Based on the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the restriction requirement is improper and therefore request reconsideration and withdrawal of the restriction requirement. Accordingly, Applicants request concurrent examination of all currently-pending claims of Groups I, II and III.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Attorney for Applicants

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